THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • JULY 13, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

June 28

WITH ANTI-ACTIVIST BURNT A COPY OF THE QURAN OUTSIDE A MOSQUE IN STOCKHOLM

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

### INDIA SUPPORTS OIC RESOLUTION AT UNHRC AGAINST QURAN DESECRATION

**The Geneva-based 47-member Council adopted the draft resolution with 28 countries voting in favour, 12 voting against and seven abstentions**

**CAUTIONS AGAINST RELIGIOUS HATRED**

The resolution came in the wake of recent Quran burnings in Sweden. It called on countries to take steps to prevent acts of religious hatred. Those voting in favour of the resolution included Bangladesh, China, Cuba, Malaysia, Maldives, Pakistan, Qatar, Ukraine and UAE. Nations voting against the motion included Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the UK and the US

**DISSENTERS CITE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

- The draft resolution was brought by Pakistan on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation as well as by the State of Palestine
- Western countries that voted against the resolution were worried that tougher steps by governments could trample freedom of expression



# Costly veggies push up retail inflation

Centre to procure tomatoes from Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra, sell at discounted prices at co-op outlets

MONIKA YADAV AND JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

WITH vegetable prices soaring, retail inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index rose to a three-month high of 4.81% in June, up from 4.31% in May and 4.7% in April.

According to government data released on Wednesday, the Consumer Food Price Index, which measures changes in the retail prices of food items, rose to 4.49% in June from 2.96% in May on account of high inflation in vegetables, pulses, meat and fish.

The data showed that vegetable inflation in June 2023 grew 12.2% over May, even though year-on-year prices saw a decline of 1%. Egg prices grew 5.5% in June while the rates of meat and fish rose 3.8%.

"Vegetables are some of the highly volatile components in India's CPI basket. Within that, prices of onion, garlic, tomato, potato, and ginger are the most unstable. Historical data suggest that price spikes in onion and ginger are not conditional upon seasonality and can occur all year round, however, that of tomato and potato are seasonal

and usually spike during the summer-monsoon months of June-September," says Debopam Chaudhuri, chief economist, Piramal Enterprises.

To address the tomato problem, the Centre has decided to procure them from producing states and sell them at discounted prices in major cities from Friday. The Department of Consumer Affairs has directed the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation and the National Cooperative Consumers Federation to procure the kitchen staple from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra for distribution in major consumption centres, where the retail prices have gone through the roof.

As tomato prices shot up to absurd levels, people have drastically cut down on its consumption, says a survey by community social media platform LocalCircles. As much as 75% of households chose to cut consumption while 7% have completely stopped buying tomatoes, notes the survey based on data from 311 districts.

**IIP grows 5.2% in May**

India's industrial production grew 5.2% in May, which is significantly lower than the year-ago growth of 19.7% but more than April's 4.2%. While the manufacturing sector's output grew 5.7%, the mining sector expanded 6.4%

# Dassault's Rafale JV with Ambani may end

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

THE Indo-French joint venture (JV) between Dassault Aviation and Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Aerostructure Ltd is likely to be dissolved as the French company has reportedly decided to pull out of the JV — Dassault Reliance Aerostructure Ltd (DRAL).

Sources said Dassault has taken the decision due to Ambani's "inability to make the investment required to keep the joint venture going". Ambani is the major partner in the 51-49 JV.

The two companies had entered into the joint venture to handle the offset obligations arising out of India's $7.6 billion deal to buy 36 Rafale fighter jets. The JV was formed in 2017. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to visit France to be the guest of honour on Bastille Day on July 14, where he is likely to announce another multi-billion dollar deal to buy 26 Rafale Marine fighters, Dassault has started looking for a new Indian partner to execute its present and future offset obligations.

DRAL, having its production facility at a 62-acre plot in the MIHAAN Special Economic Zone in Nagpur, is currently engaged in the assembly of Rafale components, including engine doors, rudder, elevons, windshield, canopy, etc.

Sources said the fate of Reliance Aerostructure's tie-up with another French company, Thales, is not yet clear. Ambani's company has another 51-49 JV with Thales — Thales Reliance Defence Systems (TRDS) — in which Reliance is a major partner. TRDS is said to be the most advanced Thales facility outside France. This, too, operates out of MIHAAN and produces Rafale components.

The Centre had introduced a defence offset policy in 2005 which requires all foreign vendors to invest a part of the contract value in India so as to help domestic defence companies grow and facilitate the transfer of technology, besides generating employment.

**Firms defaulting on offset obligations**

A large number of top foreign defence companies have defaulted on their offset obligations. Repeated requests by the defence ministry to these vendors to fulfil their obligations have fallen on deaf ears

## EU House to debate Manipur, India cross

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

INDIA on Wednesday raised objections to the European Parliament's decision to debate a resolution of the ethnic violence in Manipur, during its ongoing plenary session in Strasbourg.

"We made a reach-out to the concerned EU parliamentarians. But we made it very clear that this is a matter absolutely internal to India," Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said at a press conference.

The Manipur matter has been scheduled for discussion for the latter half of the day, under the "Debates on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the Rule of Law."

A motion for a resolution was tabled in the EU Parliament by six groups, which range from the Left, European Socialists and Greens to regionalist parties, Conservatives and centre-right political and Christian groups.

The foreign office refrained from commenting whether India has hired a European lobbying firm to counter the debate. A Brussels-based firm, Alber and Geiger, is said to have been engaged by India, but there is no confirmation on this.

Over 140 people have been killed in the violence so far.

EXPRESS READ

**Writer Milan Kundera dies in Paris at 94**

Paris: Czech-born French author Milan Kundera, whose dissident writings in communist Czechoslovakia transformed him into an exiled satirist of totalitarianism, has died in Paris. He was 94. His best-known works are *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and *The Joke* | P9

People from low-lying areas around the Yamuna relocating to safer places, in New Delhi on Wednesday | PTI

# North struggles, record Yamuna swelling in Delhi

HARPREET BAJWA & NARENDRA SETHI @ Chandigarh/Dehradun

THE situation in the rain-ravaged Uttarakhand, Punjab and Haryana continued to remain grim on Wednesday, while the swollen Yamuna in downstream Delhi hit an all-time high of 208.05 metres, inundating several low-lying areas in the national capital.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal urged Union home minister Amit Shah to reduce the outflow from Haryana's Hathni Kund barrage into the Yamuna to prevent further flooding.

In Uttarakhand, the embankment of the Solani river got breached at two places due to incessant rains, flooding 24 villages. The Gangotri and Yamunotri highways were among the 1,500-plus roads that have been closed due to landslides and rain-related damages. Pilgrims are waiting for the highways to open for their safe exit. There were also reports of a car with four persons on board skidding into the Khoh river.

In Punjab, 1,058 of its villages in 14 districts have been affected by the flood fury, with Roopnagar district taking the biggest hit. While around 10,000 people have been shifted to safer places in Punjab, 49 houses have been completely destroyed and 180 other houses partially damaged. As for Haryana, its seven districts have been affected. The toll due to rain-related incidents in Punjab and Haryana has gone up to 21.

In Himachal Pradesh, 3,000 tourists stranded in Kasol area of Kullu district have been evacuated. Fifty-two students of a school in Kullu, who were stuck at Sissu in Lahaul, too, were safely moved out. That apart, about 25,000 people stranded in Manali and Kullu since the past three days at various locations have been rescued.

But 293 others, including 243 tourists, are still stuck at the glacial Chandratal Lake in Lahaul and Spiti district because of bad weather.

**DELHI SWAMPED**

**208.05 m** Height of the Yamuna in Delhi on Wednesday, an all-time record

**207.49 m** Previous Yamuna height record on Sep 6, 1978

**43** SQ KM OF AGRICULTURAL LAND SUBMERGED UNDER 2 METRES OF WATER

- Several colonies in north and southeast Delhi like Model Town, Mukherjee Nagar, Nirankari Colony, Gopal Nagar, Indira Nagar, Majlis Park, Alipur, Mukherjee Nagar, Kingsway Camp, Delhi University, Adarsh Nagar, Civil Lines, Bela Road, Okhla swamped
- Najafgarh drain spillover enters Janakpuri, Uttam Nagar, Pankha Road, Vishnu Garden and 72 neighbouring villages

# BENGAL

**RURAL POLL RESULTS TIED TO HC ORDER**

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday said that the declaration of the panchayat election results in West Bengal will be subject to the court's final orders on a number of cases filed by Opposition parties alleging electoral malpractices | P10

# Twists, turns in B'luru double-murder, 3 held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

POLICE arrested three persons, including the main accused, Felix alias Joker Felix, at Kunigal in Tumakuru district on Wednesday in connection with the murder of the MD and CEO of a company providing internet services in the city on Tuesday.

While P Shabarish alias Felix alias Joker Felix (27) hails from Devarachikkanahalli on Bannerghatta Road, the other accused have been identified as V Vinay Reddy (23) of Roopena Agrahara and S Santosh alias Santhu (26) of Marenahalli.

Meanwhile, the investigation of the case has taken several twists and turns with the accused giving conflicting statements during their interrogation.

Initially, it was suspected that business rivalry between the victims and Felix was the reason for the double-murder. The police are probing the involvement of the owner of another company providing broadband and ISP services on Bannerghatta Road where the two victims and Felix were working.

Left: Main accused 'Joker' Felix and his associates were arrested on Wednesday

The latest twist to the case is the fight over a woman colleague between one of the victims and Felix. The woman working with the firm on Bannerghatta Road is said to be close to Felix. Subramanyam, one of the victims, who was working at the firm on Bannerghatta Road, was getting closer to the woman after divorcing his wife. It is also alleged that he had fired Felix in order to keep him away from her.

Meanwhile, the police picked up the owner of the firm on Bannerghatta Road on Wednesday for interrogation. After the double-murder, Felix made several calls to him. He was picked up from Kempegowda International Airport. CONTINUED ON: P3

M K Nasar (left) and Najeeb K A being taken to jail on Wednesday | A SANESH

# 6 convicted for chopping prof's hand in Kerala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kochi

A special NIA court here on Wednesday found six persons associated with the proscribed radical Islamic outfit, the Popular Front of India (PFI), guilty in the 2010 case over the gruesome attack on Prof T J Joseph, in which his right hand was chopped off. Five others were acquitted. Judge Anil K Bhaskar will announce the quantum of sentence at 3 pm on Thursday.

This was the second-phase trial in the case involving 11 accused who were arrested after 2015, when the first phase concluded. The same court convicted 13 and exonerated 18 in the initial trial.

Those convicted on Wednesday are Sajil, M K Nasar, Najeeb K A, M K Noushad, P P Moideen and P M Ayoob.

The court exonerated Shafeeq, Azeez Odakkali, Mohammad Rafi, Subair T P and Mansoor saying the prosecution failed to prove their involvement in the case.

The first accused, Savad, is absconding even after 13 years of the gruesome incident. The NIA has announced a ₹10 lakh bounty for his arrest.

On July 4, 2010, Prof Joseph of Newman College, Thodupuzha, and his family were brutally attacked near their house in Muvattupuzha by a seven-member gang. The attackers, who alleged a question paper prepared by the professor had insulted the Prophet, chopped off his right hand with an axe.

# Chain-snatcher's bid puts woman's life in danger

PRAVEEN KUMAR @ Bengaluru

A chain-snatcher's attempt at pulling a necklace from a 55-year-old woman almost claimed her life when she fell off the bike she was riding pillion with her husband in the city on Sunday. The victim, Malar, sustained severe facial injuries, a fractured hand and lost a few teeth when she fell on the road. Her 58-year-old businessman husband, GM Velumani, suffered minor bruises.

The incident occurred on the service road of Banaswadi Main Road near KIA showroom between 8.50 pm and 8.55 pm. They were returning home at Rajanna Layout in Horamavu from HSR Layout after performing rituals for Malar's mother, who died last month.

According to Velumani, they would not have bothered had the chain-snatcher escaped with the necklace which is only gold coated. What has become a cause for worry is the damage caused to Malar.

"Due to the traffic jam on Banaswadi Main Road, we took the service road. The accused, who was following us, came from the left side and tried to snatch my wife's necklace," Velumani told *TNIE*. P5

# No road, no Anna Bhagya for tribals of MM Hills

K SHIVA KUMAR @ Mysuru

BENEFITS of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's ambitious Anna Bhagya scheme are not reaching the tribal families living at Nagamale and nearby villages in Male Mahadeshwara Hills because of poor road connectivity.

The only road (10 km) from Pudur to Nagamale has not been asphalted and is in a pathetic condition. Because of this, truck drivers refuse to move foodgrains and other items under various government schemes to Nagamale and nearby villages.

Around 50 families are depending on locally available foodgrains for their survival. Till recently, mules were used to reach foodgrains and other commodities to villages in Male Mahadeshwara Hills. But this mode of transport is not available now as mule owners have stopped rearing them because of the rising costs.

Chandru, a resident, said they are not getting foodgrains every month. They now reach them once in four months because of poor transport facilities.

Many families at Padasulanatha village atop MM Hills trek to Palar on Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border to get foodgrains. Though the government has provided vehicles, they don't go to villages atop the hills. The villagers blame the Forest Department for the

With no transport, residents have to carry groceries to their villages

pathetic condition of the only road to their villages. The department is not allowing the local authorities to asphalt the road as it comes under MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary.

Raja, a villager, said many families have given up hopes of enjoying the benefits of Anna Baghya. Siddaramaiah, who is the chairman of Male Mahadeshwara Development Authority, should soon convene a meeting to address the problems faced by them.

PDS dealer Mani said that he could not deliver foodgrains to villages in MM Hills on time because of the bad road. Moreover, his pending transport dues have not been cleared.

Deputy Director of Food and Civil Supplies Yogananda said the PDS supplier should make arrangements to hire vehicles to take grains to beneficiaries. He has sought reports from food inspectors in this regard.